

Serial Number: 10/065,963

In the Claims

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Previously amended) A method for reducing distortion in charged particle lithographic masks, comprising the steps of:

adding a dummy fill shape in an unexposed region of a mask; and

applying a blocking layer to the region of the dummy fill shape so as to prevent the printing of the dummy fill shape.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the blocking layer is an aperture.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2 where the step of applying further comprises sliding an aperture over the dummy shape.

4. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the aperture is adjustable.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1 where the step of applying blocking layer occurs by using a second mask with an opaque region where the dummy fill shape is.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1 where the step of applying the blocking layer occurs by depositing a low stress material that covers the dummy fill shape.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1 where the step of applying the blocking layer occurs by forming a second membrane layer on the mask and patterning the membrane.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7 wherein the blocking layer is created by using a SOI starting substrate.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1 where the step of applying the blocking layer occurs after a stencil mask is fabricated.

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10. (Original) The method of claim 9 where the blocking layer is fabricated by first applying thin support layer over the stencil mask.

11-19 Claims 11-19 are cancelled.

| 20. (Previously amended) The method of claim 19 wherein the blocking layer is fabricated on a stencil mask.

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